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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000281

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: ITURI UPDATE: KARIM PREPARES TO SURRENDER, BUT
DEMOBILIZATION RESOURCES SCARCE

REF: KINSHASA 233

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Ituri District militia leader Peter Karim made good on his promise to surrender nearly 200 members of his Front for National Integration (FNI) February 27, and has pledged to send another 200, including himself, for integration into the Congolese military (FARDC) March 10. Karim has placed certain security and other conditions on fulfilling this latest promise. MONUC and FARDC officials worry there are insufficient resources available to manage the surrender of Karim's forces. End summary.

KARIM AGREES TO SURRENDER WITH MORE MILITIA MEMBERS...

¶2. (C) Ituri militia leader Peter Karim reportedly called FARDC Ituri Operations Commander General Vainqueur Mayala March 1 to confirm that he and 200 of his militia members will surrender to MONUC and FARDC authorities March 10 for military integration in Doi, about 50 miles northeast of Bunia. This latest promise follows Karim's February decision to send 170 members of his FNI militia for military integration, although he had promised earlier to surrender 200 (reftel).

¶3. (U) On February 27, the 170 militia members arrived at a transit site in Dhera, about 40 miles northeast of Bunia, and were subsequently transferred to an integration facility in Kpandroma, 20 miles further east. MONUC officials report 42 children were removed from the FNI ranks and placed in custody of child protection officials. The remaining group is currently waiting for processing and identification by Congolese demobilization authorities.

...BUT WITH CONDITIONS

¶4. (C) After the February 27 surrender, Karim promised FARDC officials he would send another 200 militia for integration -- including himself -- by March 6, but added conditions. Karim again demanded amnesty before turning himself in, and asked the FARDC to remove its troops from Doi and Kpandroma. He reportedly argued that he feared the FARDC would attempt to attack his militia while they were en route to surrender.

¶5. (C) Mayala agreed to redeploy his troops by March 8, causing Karim to delay the surrender until March 10. Karim also insisted his forces, once integrated into the military, be deployed only in Ituri, as agreed to by the GDRC.

CONCERNS ABOUT INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES

¶16. (C) MONUC and FARDC officials in Ituri are worried demobilization authorities will be unable to provide assistance to this latest group of surrendering militia. A USAID officer visiting Ituri March 6 reported the transit site in Kpandroma, which can accommodate 200 persons, already has 130 ex-combatants in place. Officials said they feared there will not be sufficient resources in place to receive and process the expected 200 militia members. They added that CONADER, the Congolese national disarmament agency, is not fully staffed and cannot play a major role in demobilizing the militia.

¶17. (C) Similarly, members of other Ituri militia groups who surrendered in December 2006 are still awaiting processing. USAID officials report some 400 ex-combatants have not yet been through any of the demobilization process at the Rwampara transit site outside Bunia because of a reported lack of funding. USAID released in late February approximately 500,000 USD to support reintegration efforts being managed by the UN Development Program (UNDP). UNDP officials, however, said they do not want to begin operations until they have sufficient funding to finish all demobilization efforts in Ituri.

FEW WEAPONS COLLECTED

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¶18. (C) Surrendering militia members have not been adhering to the "one man, one arm" policy that has previously guided DRC demobilization efforts. In theory, an ex-combatant must turn in one weapon to be accepted into the demobilization program. Of the 170 FNI members who surrendered February 27, only 27 had weapons. Since the latest round of demobilization and disarmament in Ituri began in June 2006, a total of 5,412 militia members have surrendered, with just 2,561 weapons.

¶19. (C) MONUC and FARDC officials said they have tolerated the low level of arms because they are trying to encourage as many surrenders as possible. FARDC officials, however, have begun recently pressuring militia groups to turn in more weapons, even turning away groups seeking to surrender if they do not have a sufficient number of arms.

COMMENT: DEDICATE THE RESOURCES

¶10. (C) Karim's surrender will be a critical element in resolving Ituri's militia problem but the demobilization process is at a critical point. Lack of high-level attention by the GDRC, coupled with insufficient resources, risks undermining the region's future security and stability. UNDP will need to focus on supporting these ex-combatants, ensuring the completion of the demobilization process, and dedicating sufficient personnel and resources regardless of the timetable for full funding. End comment.

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